



## Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 174

### THE COAST GUARD ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

**I continue to hear concerns about individual confidentiality and the CG-OAS.** These concerns focus on the detailed demographic (personal) questions such as gender, ethnicity, grade, etc. that if taken together, could point to a single individual at a particular unit.

**I will address this issue in three parts: 1) our commitment to confidentiality, 2) the procedures to assure confidentiality, and 3) why the detailed demographic data is needed in the first place.**

**1. Our commitment to confidentiality.** The senior leadership of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard staff responsible for managing the CG-OAS, and the staff at the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) are **personally committed to confidentiality as a matter of integrity**. If people have concerns about retribution when asked for their honest opinions and feedback via the CG-OAS-or in any form, healthy dialogue is lost and the Coast Guard and its members suffer.

**2. The procedures to assure confidentiality.** All survey responses are collected and maintained by Office of Personnel Management, not the Coast Guard. OPM is required by regulation to keep individual responses confidential. OPM provides the Coast Guard with tools to generate reports, and **these tools are designed so that no group smaller than 10 can be reported**. In other words, if a unit CO or a HQ program manager or even someone in human resources asked for a report such as "Show me the responses for all MKs of a specific gender and ethnicity at Station X," if the number is less than 10, the report will not be generated and an explanation given why. OPM has been doing this survey for over 8 years with many federal agencies using this approach.

**3. Why the detailed demographic data is needed.** Why can't we just ask people what the issues are in the Coast Guard and address them without all this detailed personal information? That is not how people deal with the world. Every member of Team Coast Guard makes hundreds of decisions that impact different parts of the work-life environment of the Coast Guard to a greater or lesser degree.

**Responsible individuals need different and specific views of information to be most effective.** The chain of command needs to look at units and groups within units; Command Master Chiefs and Rating Force Master Chiefs need different views; program managers of all kinds are working with specific segments of the Coast Guard (engineers, marine safety personnel, civilian employees, reservists, etc.) and will use the results of the CG-OAS in different ways. They will each need different views of the results. Only by capturing the demographic data can

these views be provided.

Regards, FL Ames

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### **CG OAS 2002 FAQ on the website**

[<http://www.uscg.mil/FF21/CGOASFAQS.HTM>](http://www.uscg.mil/FF21/CGOASFAQS.HTM)

**Link to the 2002 Coast Guard Organizational Assessment.** The assessment will be available for completion through the end of April.

<http://www.paassessor.org/SURVEY/>

***Username: cgoas2002***

***Password: cgoas2002***

### **ALCOAST 092/02 for full details**

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/mcpocg/1geninfo/cgoas02.htm>